

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF JOHN HICK'S RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN LIGHT OF HIS ESCHATOLOGICAL MODEL

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Date completed: April 2009

The philosophy of John Hick, who is famous for his religious pluralism, has received vigorous study in terms of its epistemology, authority, concept of God, and Christology. However, less attention is given to his paretology. As explained below, initial investigation shows that there is a need for in-depth study of Hick's religious philosophy in this area.

Based on preliminary research, Hick's religious pluralism seems to reveal a critical problem with external correspondency, as follows. His paretology, which is an attempt to accept all eschatologies of major world religions as valid, may as a consequence tend to invalidate them all in the end. Moreover, other factors may indicate the presence of inconsistencies in Hick's paretological model, which may reflect upon the adequacy of his overall model of religious pluralism.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address and critically evaluate the external correspondency and internal consistency of Hick's eschatological model, which may provide the basis for a critical evaluation of his religious pluralism as a whole. The evaluation of John Hick's religious pluralism in light of his paretology will be accomplished through the lenses of the correspondence and coherence theories of truth.

Hick's paretology, as discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5, and summarized in chapter 6, is open to various criticism when judged by correspondence and coherence theories of truth. From my research of Hick's paretology, I uncover and present reasons that back twenty criticisms of Hick's concept of paretology. Based upon these twenty criticisms, the first general conclusion of my dissertation is that Hick's notion of paretology does not show sufficient internal coherence nor is it fully coherent with his pluralistic model of world religions. The second general conclusion is that there is lack of external correspondency with the noumenal Real and with the phenomenal paretological manifestations of religious experiences in particular religions. As a result, questions may be raised whether Hick's paretological model can be regarded as a convincing theological-philosophical scientific construct. These considerations have important implications for Hick's religious pluralism that lead to the final conclusion of my dissertation. I find Hick's religious pluralism as a whole to be weakened by the problematic condition of his paretology.